REGISTERED
30 AUG 1910
MADRAS

# THE UNREST IN THE EDUCATIONAL WORLD

BEING A LECTURE DELIVERED ON THE OCCASION OF THE SEVENTH CELEBRATION OF THE NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL DAY, TRICHINOPCLY

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BY

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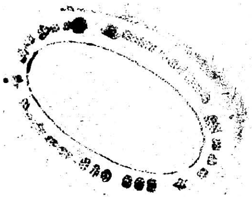

OF THE REGISTRAR OF BOOKS
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# THE UNREST IN THE EDUCATIONAL WORLD.

THE subject of education is one of perennial interest. No man who loves his country can fail to turn his thoughts to a consideration of its problems. At the present moment the education question has assumed such an importance and is so much to the fore that even the most callous amongst us is obliged to pause and to enquire. Critics amongst us and those that look upon educational progress in India with no friendly eye are prescribing nostrums for what they consider to be the evils of the present system. The subject of the relationship between the State and Education is not a new one. It has baffled and continues to disturb the minds of the most eminent statesmen in England. Mr. Balfour's Education Act of 1902 is admitted on all hands to have been a failure. The present Liberal Government tried to deal with the question on two occasions. The House of Lords found the solution offered by the party in power to be inconsistent with the traditions of the Country and rejected it. The spiritual Lords took a leading part in the discussions. Compromises were attempted, but all of them were found unworkable. In this country, the Lord Bishop of Madras, following in the wake of his spiritual colleagues in England, is apparently dissatisfied with the education imparted in our schools and advises Government to practically withdraw from education altogether. His Lordship does not propose, that the State should provide funds for Religious education. His contribution to the discussion is entirely destructive. One would feel obliged to the learned Bishop, if he could suggest a system of education which would enable the Government to impart moral or ethical instruction upon a non-sectarian and non-controversial basis in our Schools and Colleges. I am glad to find from a telegram in the *Madras Mail* of Friday that Mr. Sharpe, the Director of Public

Instruction, Bombay does not consider the question unsolvable. I find from the report of a speech in the last evening's *Hindu* that the Governor of Bombay is directing his attention to this subject.

To grapple with the problem that is being so much talked about, it is necessary to have a clear idea of the educational past in this country, both remote and near. It is with a view to attention being drawn to what the position was before the advent of the British Rule and to what the British Government attempted in the early days of its administration that I have chosen this subject for discussion. I intend taking you through some well recognised epochs in the development of Indian Education.

The English did not find us a barbarous people. It is true that some of them were shocked to find us bare-footed. But it was conceded even in the early days of British rule, that we were a cultured people, proud of our civilization and contemptuous of the tastes and pursuits of others. There was good reason to be proud of our achievements. But there was no reason for treating with contempt the ideal of material progress and prosperity which other civilizations symbolised. To go back to my review, the English did not come to rule in India over a savage tribe with no historic past or civilization. That unenviable task fell to the lot of white races in South Africa, Canada, Australia and the United States and the savage races that came under their sway are almost extinct now. It was to the everlasting glory of the British rule in India that their dominion was to be over men of culture, of civilization and of peculiarly assimilative capacity. Principles of governing such a people cannot be the same as those adopted to rule over a semi-barbarous tribe or clan. The Board of Directors who had the privilege of ruling India in those days had their attention drawn to the subject of education very early. There were two schools of thought then——one desiring that all education should be imparted in the Vernaculars and that every effort should be made to resuscitate Sanskrit Literature;

and the other urging that higher education on the best European model should be imparted to us so that its recipients may enjoy the full benefits of British rule and culture. Lord Macaulay was the champion of this second and sounder view of the needs of India. It is not necessary that we should endorse his view that there was nothing worth knowing in our ancient literature and philosophy and that it would be money wasted to endeavour to bolster up the dying language. Lord Macaulay knew nothing of our literature and as readers of his Essays know he is most dogmatic when he knows least. However, his conclusions on the subject were unexceptionable. This was in or about the year 1835 and the principle that education as given in the West should be imparted to His Majesty's Indian subjects was recognised by the Board of Directors about that time.

The next step was taken in 1854. Lord Halifax's famous despatch of 1854, known as the Educational charter of India put the seal upon Lord Macaulay's minute. I shall quote a few sentences from this communication of the then Secretary of State for India, to show how broad-minded and statesman-like was the pronouncement. It says: "Among many subjects of importance, none can have a stronger claim to our attention than that of education. It is one of our most sacred duties to be the means, as far as in us lies, of conferring upon the natives of India those vast moral and material blessings which flow from the general diffusion of useful knowledge and which India may under Providence derive from her connection with England. ..............................Nor while the character of England is deeply concerned in the success of our efforts for the promotion of education, are her material interests altogether unaffected by the advance of European knowledge in India; this knowledge will teach the natives of India the marvellous results of the employment of labour and capital, rouse them to emulate us in the development of the vast resources of their country, guide them in their efforts; and gradually, but certainly confer upon them all the advantages which accompany the

healthy increase of wealth and commerce; and at the same time, secure to us a larger and more certain supply of many articles necessary for our manufactures and extensively consumed by all classes of our population, as well as an almost inexhaustible demand for the produce of British labour......... Before proceeding further, we must emphatically declare that the education which we desire to see extended in India is that which has for its object the diffusion of the improved arts, sciences, philosophy, and literature of Europe; in short of European knowledge." Noble words indeed—tinctured to some extent by the spirit of the trader and the shopkeeper. Three years after came the Indian Mutiny of 1857. Unfriendly critics then as now suggested that the Mutiny was the result of education. Every body now knows that it was in a great measure due to the failure of the Government to recognise the religious prejudices and susceptibilities of the Indian Sepoys. There were other causes also that contributed to the disaster, but education had nothing to do with the unrest. On the other hand it was education that enabled Sir Salar Jung to save the situation in Hyderabad. In the year 1859, fortunately for India, the young Queen was our sovereign and Lord Canning was the Viceroy, and the Secretary of State found no reason for believing that the Mutiny was due to the spread of education; and the despatch of Lord Halifax was re-affirmed. One sentence in the Educational despatch of 1859 sounds as if the voice of the adverse critics of to-day is but the echo of a distant past—shall I say discredited? The first paragraph of that despatch is in these words:—"The time seems to have arrived when some examination may be instituted into the operation of the orders despatched from this country in 1854 for the prosecution of measures on a more extended scale for promoting education in India. Such an examination seems more especially required since the measures, and particulary the more recent measures, of Government for the promotion of education have been alleged to be among the causes which have brought about the recent outbreak in the Army of Bengal, and the disquietude

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and apprehension which are believed to have prevailed in some portions of Her Majesty's Indian territories."

History repeats itself. These baselesss suggestions were found to be false and the principles of 1854 enunciated by the Board of Directors were accepted in 1859. The result was the establishment of the Indian Universities in Madras, Bombay and Calcutta. May I ask those persons who ascribe anarchy and sedition to the spread of education to think over what happened between 1859 and the advent of Lord Curzon? Everywhere educated men were regarded as the truest friends of British Government. They were allowed the privilege of electing Councillors to Municipalities. They were employed in posts of trust and responsibility under the Government. They guided the destinies of native states in troublous times and they administered justice in all Courts of the Empire. This noble phalanx of statesmen, administrators and judges shed lustre on British rule. If the croakings of the raven that predicts no good had been taken seriously, England would have lost the services of these eminent men. No doubt she would have given us railways and canals; but she would not occupy as she does to-day, the proud position of ruling over countless millions of people who have assimilated her teachings, appreciated her generosity and brilliantly aided her efforts in the administration of this vast Empire.

The next period to which reference may be made is that connected with the Education Commission of 1882. Lord Ripon was at the head of the administration then. That great and good Viceroy gave his sanction to the principles so well established already and afforded additional facilities for the spread of education.

The next step was taken by Lord Curzon's Government. I want to avoid politics altogether. But I must give expression to my sincere belief that the Universities Commission, the despatch which brought it into existence, and the resolution which was founded upon its report, were calculated to put back educational progress in this country.

Turning to the immediate present it is impossible to ignore the feeling of dissatisfaction with the existing state of affairs. Those that claim to speak on behalf of the Government say that the products of education are not entitled to the confidence and responsibility which it has been their privilege to enjoy hitherto. The principle of filling up vacancies in the Provincial Service by competitive examinations to a limited extent has been given up. In Secondary schools fees are to be raised so as to make education dearer. These are some of the outward manifestations of a troubled state of feeling. The atmosphere is surcharged with the bacilli of unrest and the body politic has apparently caught the infection. I believe sincerely that the educated classes have done nothing to deserve this unfriendly attitude towards them. As was eloquently pointed ont by Mr. Justice Abdur Rahim in his Convocation address, it is not higher education that is responsible for the violence and anarchism that you find in some parts of India and among certain classes of people. The failures of the system are the exponents of the cult of assassination and not the successful products of it. My own impression is that anarchism has been introduced into this country from abroad. It is exotic and has its origin in the tenets of the enemies of humanity who have their head-quarters and guiding spirits in some of the capital cities of Europe and America. All lovers of India and all those that strongly believe that the prosperity of this country is bound up with the permanence of British Suzerainty in India are anxious that Government should not step back. It should do nothing to weaken its hold upon the educated classes by loosening the bonds of love, of trust and of confidence. The Government has and will have the sympathies and active co-operation of a deserving class of men who have stood by it all these years if it does not falter or hesitate. Can the Government go back upon the eloquent minute of Lord Macaulay and the statesmenlike document of Lord Halifax without seriously impairing its prestige? Is India in a worse state now than it was in 1859, immediately after the great

Mutiny? Is it most likely that the far-seeing and generous statesmanship of the year 1859 will not have its confirmation by the present Secretary of State and by a Viceroy of the courage and calibre of Lord Minto? I do believe that the statesmanship of 1910 will not be behind that of 1859 in its grasp of the true inwardness of the situation and in applying remedies which the new forces at work demand. The sun cannot go back upon the dial. British prestige and British capacity to rule are bound up with the advance of education in India. If by any lack of foresight education suffers and is retarded in its onward march, our rulers will find that the forces of anarchy have multiplied a thousand-fold and that their endeavours to put them down should be redoubled. None would be more pleased than the enemies of mankind, of India and of English rule, if anything is done to put back education. It would be playing into the hands of these bad men to put a check upon the spread of education.

I have dealt so much upon the attitude of the Government because it is the duty of all loyal subjects to speak out their mind so that the Government may have before it all phases of the question before the final step is taken.

I wish to pass on from the Government to the utterances of one of its most trusted officers. As was pointed out by Mr. Justice Abdur Rahim, the Lord Bishop of Madras is honoured and respected by Hindus and Mahomedans no less than by those who acknowledge his spiritual sway. On that account and because of the auspices under which he spoke, his speech at the Saidapet Teachers' Union, deserves our careful consideration. Mr. Justice Abdur Rahim in his masterly speech has shown that the good Bishop is not right in saying that our Colleges and Schools turn out 'godless' men. As was eloquently pointed out, it would require a good deal more to eradicate the inborn religious feeling in the Hindu and the Mussalman than all the teachings of Huxley and Spencer put together. But I am inclined to think that the Government should take steps to impart non-sectarian religious instruction

in schools and that grants should be made for that purpose. I do not want to elaborate a scheme on this occasion, but I think it will not be and ought not to be difficult to enlist the co-operation of the leaders of Hindu and Mahomedan faiths in arranging for religious teaching in our schools. If I followed the Lord Bishop rightly he would advise the Government to practically withdraw from the field of education. I am reluctant to say that such advice could not have been meant seriously. What would be the result of such a step? The future education of the country will be in the hands of Missionary bodies. I myself was educated in a Missionary institution not far from this school and I have the highest regard for Christian Missionaries. There is a network of educational institutions in India in which Mission agencies impart secular education of a high character. But ardent Christian as he is, can the Lord Bishop fail to see that the withdrawal of Government from education will throw the country into the throes of disaffection and discontent? Indian youths resort to Missionary schools, because of the Government control exercised over them, because of the non-compulsory character of the religious instruction imparted in them and because their ultimate success depends not upon religious proficiency but upon the capacity shown in mastering the secular subjects. Once loose the reins of control over these bodies, once make it known that they are unfettered in their administration within and uncontrolled from outside, the Mission schools wiil be nothing but proselytising agencies. I sincerly hope that the Lord Bishop's advice will never be given effect to. Upon what principle is the advice to withdraw from education based? The Bishop says that the Sovereign is a Christian. I must say that this is not a very patriotic pronouncement. The Hindus believe that all Sovereigns are the incarnations of Vishnu. It is this belief more than anything else that binds them in bonds of love and attachment to the British rule. Even in the days of Mahomedan rule, when the principle of the religious crusader rather than that of the land grabber dictated the conquest of

India, the Mussalman rulers made grants to Hindu Temples, provided annuities for religious preachers and pensions to orthodox teachers. A sovereign in his capacity as such has no religion but that of his subjects. From the personnel of the Sovereign, look to the sovereign body that rules India, namely, the British Parliament. It is composed of every conceivable class and creed—Jews, Christians, Roman Catholics, Protestants, and Agnostics. There were Parsees in it. There was a Hindu who was within an ace of getting into it. I believe the Lord Bishop knows that the virtual ruler of India at the present moment is an Agnostic. As I said before, it would undermine the principles of English Government to say that because in his personal beliefs Emperor Edward conforms to the Protestant faith, he is in his sovereign capacity a Christian any more than he is a Hindu or Mahomedan. It is this untenable notion that is believed by Indians to be responsible for the administration of their religious endowments not being placed on a sounder basis than it is. Indians of all denominations devoutly hope that these counsels may not prevail. In the days of the Hindu Kings, the cost of education was borne entirely by the Sovereign. The teacher received no fee but the obeisance and devotion of the pupils. The Sovereign made grants to these teachers. In the Mahomedan Empire rich grants were made for the support of religious institutions and religious teachers. The British Government succeeding to such an inheritance cannot divest itself of responsibility in the matter. The idea that education should be self-supporting, the feeling that Government should retire from the field are notions which would strike at the root of British power and prestige.

I think I have said enough to indicate that we are living in times of stress and difficulty. There have been searchings of hearts and there have been counsels of perfection. As I said before, the prevalent unrest is responsible for the idea that the basis of education requires re-consideration. All progress implies dissatisfaction with the existing state of affairs. There can be legitimate unrest in so far as it manifests itself in honest

criticism and in a sincere desire to point out defects. But in India, in some quarters, I am free to admit that that limit has been passed.

The country is passing through a crisis. I think it is more than half way through. When new ideas and new aspirations are mixed up with an old civilization, there must be a ferment. It is impossible to move on in a crowd without treading upon somebody's shoes. It is the inevitable law of all progress. If the onward movement can be pressed on without violence, and with due regard to the rights of others, it would be a glorious achievement no doubt. But human nature in all its aspects in such a vast continent as India cannot be expected to be completely steady and staid. There will be some men who will never be amenable to reason, whom no love can conciliate, on whom benefits and affection will have no effect. These do not represent and constitute the nation. Their crimes are no index to the national character. These unprincipled and half-educated people fail to recognise that under no conceivable circumstances can violence and assassination help a nation to achieve its rights. The subject is a hackneyed one and the presence of students irresistibly leads one to say a few words upon it. I have always thought that it is improper for students to take an active part in the political movements of the day however much it is desirable that they should discuss abstract political questions in their debating societies. Events of the last five years have fully confirmed my ideas upon the subject. Politics is a science for mature minds. When a person has received a sound general education which will enable him to discriminate between fact and fiction, which has schooled him to observe patience and perseverance in national concerns and which by the teachings of history opens his eyes to the achievements of nations by silent and steady work and not by irremediable acts of cowardice and assassination, then he will be in a position to form a true estimate of political rights and privileges. Immature minds are apt to be impatient. They are inclined to attribute

individual misdeeds to class prejudice. They are prone to mistake brutality for strengh and bravado for courage. Such minds ought not to be allowed to dabble in politics. I, in common with others, deplore the national degradation and humiliation which these young men have brought upon the land. The Hindu student is a bye-word in these days for unruly behaviour and intemperate language. He is a suspect, to use a Police expression. The Brahmin student has the misfortune to be regarded as a conspirator. It behoves you all to wipe off this stigma. In gatherings like the present, by the interchange of ideas and by taking note of what is said of you by friends and foes, you can endeavour to so conduct yourself as to deserve the approbation of your elders and the appreciation of your teachers. I want you to be impressed with the belief that loyalty to the reigning Sovereign is the most sacred birth-right of Hindus. I shall give you a short story from one of our Epics to show how ingrained loyalty is amongst us.

All of you have heard of Bishma the great warrior. The indebtedness of India to him is very great. Most of our canons of Sanathana Dharma are drawn from his instructive answers to Yudhistira. It is not upon these that I wish to speak to-day. Bishma, on every conceivable occasion impressed upon Duryodhana the necessity for dealing fairly with the Pandavas. He rebuked him, counselled him and threatened him. But Duryodhana would not yield and war became inevitable. Where do you find Bishma? Not in the ranks of those whose claims he considered to be just, not as leader of the forces who were fighting an honest cause. No, he stood by his Sovereign. Love for the Pandavas did not interfere with his loyalty to his sovereign. Veneration for Sree Krishna did not lead him away from his post as the chief of his King's forces. He fought the hardest battle against those whom he loved, against a cause which he believed to be true and in opposition to the Lord whom he bowed to as the true incarnation of the Supreme. What is the lesson that you and I have to gather from this

episode? Even if you consider that your sovereign is wrong, even though your criticisms and comments may bear no fruit, your place is by your sovereign and your duty is to work for him. I have taken the case of a wicked sovereign to illustrate my position. I am not one of those that consider that repeated asseverations of the benefits of British rule would conduce to loyalty. The facts are patent. We are living under the most tolerant of administrations. History in this country does not furnish us with examples of a higher ideal of Government than the one under which we live. Of course there are drawbacks in the administration. We are entitled to scrutinise the actions of the Government and to point out the defects. We shall do so notwithstanding restrictions and penal provisions. But these defects in detail ought to engender no hatred towards our rulers. If Bishma was loyal to the core to Duryodhana, is there any Hindu who can honestly say that he is not bound to be loyal and devoted to the British Government a thousand-fold ? I have come across of only one historical instance of personal loyalty similar to that of Bishma. In Richard II, Shakespeare makes the Duke of York appeal to the King to put to death his own son, as that son was intriguing against the virtual ruler, although he was a usurper.

Henry IV when apprised of the danger explains,

> Oh Loyal father of a treacherous son
> Thou sheer, immaculate and silver fountain
> From whence this stream, though muddy passages
> Has held his current and defiled himself
>
> * * *
>
> And thy abundant goodness shall excuse
> This deadly blot in thy digressing son.

Beautiful as these lines are and nobly as they depict the loyalty and attachment of the Duke of York to the crown, they will be considered feeble and inadequate to describe the sturdy loyalty and devotion of Bishma to Duryodhana. It is this spirit which we should cultivate. The feeling that has come upon a few misguided youths is of extraneous growth. It is

not germane to the soil. You must endeavour your best to rescue the fair fame of your mother-land by walking in the foot-steps of our national heroes and by dis-associating yourself from the teachings and preachings of men who are traitors to the country's cause by being traitors to their Sovereign.

Gentlemen, one word more and I have done. It is impossible to over-rate the value of gatherings like yours in the present state of the country. They generate a feeling of affection for the Alma mater. They engender a spirit of comradeship and enable each of you to compare and contrast notes with your fellow students. They ought to enable those of you who feel as strongly as I do upon our duty to our Sovereign and to our country to check the erratic instincts of your brethren who from either want of guidance, through impulse or through a mistaken conception of right and wrong, are inclined to spread disaffection. I do not believe that there is any among those who have come under the influence of my friends Messrs Sesha Aiyangar and Sundara Sastriar who will betray the interests of his country and of his Sovereign by taking up the attitude which I have mentioned. But as I am speaking of such gatherings in general I am justified in drawing attention to the value of these School day celebrations. There is one thing more that should be attended to. Interchange of thoughts and ideas is not enough; counsel and advice from each other is not enough; you must feel proud of having received your education in this school and you must feel pleasure at the recollection that the moulding of your character in your impressionable age was entrusted to the charge of such good teachers as you have had. Gentlemen, I am afraid that most young men in this country who are in colleges do not come under the personal influence of their professors. In my days, my friends and myself used to be proud of our teachers and our teachers felt a parental interest in our career at school and in our success in after-life. This reciprocal feeling of love and affection is gradually being replaced by the mechanical dictation of notes to enable the students to get through

the examination. Indian education, prior to the advent of the British, was entirely personal. The teacher left his mark on the student who remembered to his dying day the solicitude of his preceptor for his spiritual and intellectual advancement. So it was, I am told, with our Mussalman brethren. Even in the not very distant past, the names of certain educationists in the Presidency Town and in the Mofussil were in the mouths of every one and in the grateful recollections of the pupils whom they taught, encouraged and helped. I am not wrong in saying that in some colleges the Professors are not able to recognise the pupils outside, nay, even inside the class room. When the mechanical roll call is finished and the Professor is relieved of his burden, he ceases to think of his pupils and the pupils have no further need for him. The influence which the teachers of 20 years ago exercised over their students was due to the love of those men for their work and to their interest in seeing that those who sat at their feet reaped the benefit of their teachings. If teachers are more in touch with their pupils, if they do not regard their work as done the moment they have explained the text books prescribed, the angularities of the student will disappear, their character will be well formed and strengthened and the body politic will be the richer by such development. I exhort you, students, to cultivate a feeling of veneration for your teachers. I request you, teachers, to give freely and lovingly what you have been the recipients of. It will bless you that give it ungrudingly and it will enrich those that receive it gratefully. It will be a bond of union between you, and both of you will be the better, the nobler and the purer by this process. As I said before, love and mutual goodwill so engendered, affection and regard so generated, will in addition to bringing happiness and contentment to the persons concerned, react upon society, upon your neighbours and upon your country and will help it, on its onward march. Above all do not forget that we are a nation of intensely religious habits of mind. Lord Sree Krishna asks each of us to do his duty without regard

to consequences. The teacher and the taught have to bear this in mind and if the glorious exhortation of the greatest preceptor of mankind is to bear fruit in his chosen land, there must be truth and rectitude in our intercourse with others, love and affection for our neighbours, loyalty and devotion to the Sovereign and peace and goodwill towards all.

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